

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

Good Afternoon All Respected Members of the Appropriations Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and address the portion of the Governor's Bill # 6365 which proposes to close The Commission on Children.

My name is Alice B. Buttwell. I live in New Milford. I am a parent of a 20-year old son with multiple, complex special care needs. I work part-time as the Northwest Regional Coordinator for The CT Family Support Network and part-time as a Family Support Consultant for the Northwest Medical Home Initiative for Children & Youth with Special Care Needs at St. Mary's Hospital. The Commission on Children serves on our CT Family Support Council (CTFSC).

I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to closing The Commission on Children (COC). COC has served on the CTFSC and is a vital link of support and collaboration with our Council on the work we do to help children with special healthcare needs and their families.

As a unique agency since 1985, COC brings representatives of the three legislative, executive and judicial government branches together with representatives of the private sector to promote public policies in the best interests of all children. A few of their numerous initiatives that are all about children helped to promote and strengthen the father's role in the family unit with their child/ren and that of the grandparent's role in absence of the parent/s.

And all of these initiatives lend itself to outreach in all communities across the state for the parents, fathers and grandparents who cannot make it to the LOB but can share and be included by being able to view all of these humanistic and educational programs on television or viewing CT-N, letting these families know that they are not alone and that this is what they can do in parent engagement to help their children or learn and educate themselves on what programs are out there for their children. All of these programs help to increase and promote awareness on various topics to parents in the best interest of their child/ren. It

also gives them the opportunity to share and give back when they are able, and participate more positively in the lives of the children.

COC's legislative agenda focuses on improving basic services for children and their families while also reducing unnecessary expenditures and streamlining procedures in these difficult times. Continued dedication and commitment of their high-quality, diversified staff are in constant visibility by their research, policy, presence, and work in the testimonies that they bring to the legislative hearings, proactive forums, and all the preventative and active engagement programs on behalf of children. Their website (www.cga.ct.gov/coc/) is truly a testimonial to their history of all that COC staff has done, and continues to do, to work in the best interests of our children. It should **NOT** go unnoticed but instead **read and reviewed** for all of the specific topics they proactively engage in on policy and legislation, health & safety, education, and parent engagement.

On behalf of all of our children and their families in CT, please **do NOT** close the CT Commission on Children but instead keep it in operation to continue in all the necessary work that it does.

Respectfully,

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